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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 5 NOVEMBER 1999**

## **Guatemala: Amnesty International urges vote for human rights**

Amnesty International today urged all Guatemalans to make human rights an issue when deciding how to cast their votes in the presidential elections on 7 November.

“The Guatemalan electorate should evaluate what all the candidates said during the campaign on important human rights issues before deciding who gets their vote,” Amnesty International said.

The human rights organization called on voters to consider in particular what each candidate said he would do to address the issue of impunity. It asked too, what candidates had to say about whether those responsible for past gross human rights abuses should be eligible for public office. And what about compensation for victims and their families?

“There should be no power without responsibility,” Amnesty International stressed. “After the elections, the voters should remember what the winners promised on these and other issues, and ensure that they deliver on their promises.”

Amnesty International sent an Open Letter to all presidential and vice-presidential candidates in September urging them to inform the Guatemalan electorate of their positions on human rights issues. The letter recommended a series of steps it felt the winning candidate should take to make progress on human rights issues.

“Such steps are vital to restore the faith of the electorate and of the international public in the ability of the Guatemalan government to fulfill national and international human rights obligations. All candidates -- whether they win or lose -- should do their utmost to promote and support human rights issues,” Amnesty International said.

*Since the letter was sent, Amnesty International has continued to monitor the electoral campaigns of the various candidates carefully, and after the election, will vigorously remind the winning candidate of what they said on important human rights matters.*

*Several of the candidates have promised to tackle impunity and bring the perpetrators of past gross human rights violations to justice. Others have raised issues about the eligibility of people involved in abuses to seek elective office. The human rights organization will seek a meeting with whoever wins as soon as possible after the election.*

*“We will remind the victorious candidates of what they promised the Guatemalan electorate and will put forward our ideas as to how they can achieve what they promised,” Amnesty International concluded. ENDS.../*

**For more information or to receive a copy of the Open Letter sent to candidates please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on + 44 171 413 5566 or visit our website at <http://www.amnesty.org>**